1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

ting on the front porch of Liza Basden's • small, compactly constructed brown house, we listened to her comments about the prevailing beliefs and customs. The scene before us was restful. The garden planted at the sides and front of the house was enclosed by a low wire fence. Within this enclosure a number of dogs and chickens scuttled about. At a short distance from the house stood an iron pump and an immense rusted iron pot, probably used in the past for boiling clothes. On all sides as far as the eye could see were vast stretches of green land, shaded by massive-trunked, moss-draped trees and covered with an abundance of semi-tropical foliage and underbrush. Here and there could be glimpsed the slanting roofs of neighboring houses.

When we first arrived Liza, a pretty golden-skinned, rather heavy-set woman about eighty years of age, and a small black grandchild were the only occupants of the porch. She told us she had recently come home from a visit to children in the North. Presently her husband and a daughter approached without speaking and sat down unobtrusively in a corner. For the most part they listened to the conversation, contributing only an occasional remark.

"I wuz bawn with a caul," Liza told us, pausing in her task of peeling and eating figs from the pan that she held in her lap. "That means I see ghos.[4] Least I could see em till aftuh I stop havin chillun. Then I stop seein em.

"Three of my chillun they bawn with cauls too. They wuz always skedduh than othuhs. They wuz always fraid of the dahk an nevuh lak tuh go off by themselfs. I nevuh know jis wut they see."

"What did the ghost that you saw look like?" we inquired.

A reflective expression crossed Liza's round pleasant face and she nodded her gray head with its neatly pinned braids.

"They peah jis as nachral as anybody. Most of em ain got no heads. Jis go right along down the path.[59] One time

• *Liza Basden, Harris Neck.*

POSSUM POINT

At length we came upon a neatly kept house enclosed by a wire fence set back from the road. In the distance we could see a bent and stocky figure trudging toward us along the road and this we thought might be Alec. At one side of the house was a garden; at the other side the sprawling branches of an old oak tree shaded an iron pump and an ancient black iron pot used for boiling clothes. Chickens scuttled about the yard and a small black puppy, dozing in the sun, awoke at our approach.

On the porch a group of Negroes were seated. A plump, elderly woman, a young girl and two small children watched with interest as we approached.

The older woman was Rachel,* Alec Anderson's wife (Plate XIV).[A] She scarcely appeared to be the seventy-three years she admitted. Her round good-natured face was framed with a number of tight little gray braids on top of which perched a small brown felt hat. Her green blouse and red skirt were worn but clean and her bare brown feet peeped out from under the voluminous skirt. The younger woman was reticent but friendly, and the two children watched the proceedings with wide-eyed concern.

The man we had noticed walking down the road turned in at the gateway, and as we had surmised this was Alec (Plate XIII).**[B] He was clad in a pair of faded and torn blue overalls and a battered felt hat. Thick-lensed brown glasses did not entirely hide amiable, intelligent eyes. With profound courtesy the old man greeted us and started in to chat in a pleasant, unselfconscious manner.

"Cose yuh do heah bout cunjuh," he told us. "But I nebuh bodduh much wid dat kine uh ting. Deah's plenty uh folks wut does belieb in it an I hab heah uh strange tings happenin tuh some folks wut hab spells put on um." [15]

Here Rachel interrupted. "I alluz bun muh haiah com-

* *Rachel Anderson, Possum Point.*
** *Alec Anderson, Possum Point.*

A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-N--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-M--Analyst]